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ABSTRACT

This document presents the results of the Youthpoll, a survey administered to 1971 freshmen at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The survey was designed to find if students approved of the named activity, have participated in it, or would participate in it in the future. The activities under question were: carrying picket signs; taking soft drugs (marijuana, etc.); taking hard drugs (heroin, etc.); demonstrating non-violently for a just cause; demonstrating non-violently for any cause; taking alcohol; circulating petitions; cheating; using tobacco; writing to public officials; demonstrating violently for a just cause; demonstrating violently for any cause; tutoring non-white minority group students; and campaigning for public officials. Other questions were designed to elicit attitudes concerning the 18 year-old vote; the honesty of government officials; student rights to protest; hippies; activists; police involvement in campus demonstrations; racial protests; adults; and pollution control. (HS)

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A University Research Study

YOUTHPOLL

1971 FRESHMAN CLASS

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State University of New York at Buffalo
Division of Instructional Services
University Research

YOUTHPOLL
1971 Freshman Class

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1971

YOUTHPOLL RESULTS

State University of New York at Buffalo

September 1971

Youthpoll, a survey device constructed by Dr. Gordon Sabine at the American College Testing Center during 1970, was administered to two randomly selected sessions of the Summer Planning Conference. The two hundred thirty-one respondents were in attendance at the July 8th and July 22nd sessions. There were somewhat more resident students in the samples than commuters, and more males than females. The sample appears representative of the freshman class to whom the results may be generalized, at least on the basis of the sex - residence variables.

Some difficulties of interpretation arise from the form of the responses, particularly the first item. While the directions to respondents caused no difficulty, the combinations of the categories "approve," "have", and "would" result in three basic data tables.

Table 1 summarizes the data from the eight possible response categories in the most complete fashion. The "have" and "would" categories are essentially temporal divisions while the approve decision appears to be an ethical decision. Some students have and would participate in activities without approving of them.

Table 2 presents only the data from the single response category approve, the single response category have, and the single response category would. Each of these is a single response with no multiple responses contained within the table.

Table 3 contains combined responses, single and multiple. For example, under "approve," approve, approve and have, approve and would, and approve,have and would are all reported within the "approve" category. Similarly the categories have and would contain the single and multiple responses appropriate to the designation.

The three tables present the same question in different report styles. Perhaps most informative is the percentage of students who disapprove, haven't and wouldn't participate in any of the activities named. In fact, an approach to the data to be kept in mind when using any of the tables is the proportion of students who choose neither to approve nor to participate. The nonparticipation ranks range from lows of three percent (demonstrating nonviolently for a just cause and writing to public officials) to 100% on taking hard drugs and demonstrating violently for any course. In all three tables, the "blank" column indicates that proportion of the total response choosing not to circle "approve" "would," or "have."

From the first three tables it may be inferred that hard drugs and violence are unattractive to the entering freshman, while more socially approved behaviors, non-violent demonstration, writing public officials, tutoring, circulating petitions, and campaigning are far more attractive.

From Table 4, the five items with which at least 80% of the respondents agreed are:

89% Eighteen year olds are mature enough to be given the right to vote.

89% There should be more investigations of the honesty and integrity of government officials.

89% Any student should be allowed to protest non-violently without fear of reprisal.

85% Most students want non-violent change

80% Most adults think that youths with beards, long hair, "hippie" dress, will behave in a certain way (i.e., disrespectfully).

From the same table, the items eliciting the strongest proportions of <u>disagreement</u> are:

80% The activist can be characterized as a "mental case."

74% College administrators should call the police at the first sign of trouble.

71% Only by violence can Blacks gain what Whites have deprived them of for 300 years.

64% Most adults want youth to live by very strict "Puritan" values.

63% To control pollution all we need to do is enforce existing laws.

TABLE 1

1. General Activities

Use this key to indicate your response:

If you approve of the activity named, circle the word APPROVE to the left. (If you do not approve of the activity, do not make any mark.)

If you have participated in the activity one or more times, circle the word HAVE to the left. If you have not participated in it, do not circle HAVE.)

If given the opportunity you would participate in the activity in the future, circle the word WOULD to the left. (If you would not so participate, do not circle the word WOULD.)

On each line, circle as many answers as apply to you - none, one, two or all three.

For example: APPROVE HAVE WOULD Going to college.

1 Approve	2 Have	3 App./Have	4 Would	5 App./Would	6 Have/Would	7 App./Have/Wd.	BLANK	
22	2	1	5	36	6	11	22	Carrying picket signs
08	07	4	5	03	1	26	45	Taking "soft" drugs (marijuana, etc.)
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	Taking "hard" drugs (heroin, etc.)
19	2	03	6	38	-	28	3	Demonstrating non-violently for a just cause
15	-	-	1	6	-	4	74	Demonstrating non-violently for any cause
7	13	06	1	2	6	53	13	Taking alcohol
21	4	03	5	24	-	35	7	Circulating petitions
-	20	-	-	-	4	3	73	Cheating
11	16	06	1	-	2	11	53	Using tobacco
16	6	04	6	30	-	36	3	Writing to public officials
7	-	-	3	02	-	1	87	Demonstrating violently (break windows, set fires) for a just cause
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Demonstrating violently (break windows, set fires) for any cause
27	1	1	6	42	-	12	10	Tutoring non-white minority group students
27	3	1	4	35	1	19	11	Campaigning for public officials

TABLE 2

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THESE ACTIVITIES?

A	H	W	BLANK	
22%	2%	5%	22%	Carrying picket signs
8%	7%	5%	45%	Taking "soft" drugs (marijuana, etc.)
0%	0%	0%	100%	Taking "hard" drugs (heroin, etc.)
19%	2%	6%	3%	Demonstrating non-violently for a just cause
15%	0%	1%	74%	Demonstrating non-violently for any cause
7%	13%	1%	13%	Taking alcohol
21%	4%	5%	7%	Circulating petitions
0%	20%	0%	73%	Cheating
11%	16%	1%	53%	Using tobacco
16%	6%	6%	3%	Writing to public officials
7%	0%	3%	87%	Demonstrating violently for a just cause (break windows, set fires)
0%	0%	0%	100%	Demonstrating violently for any cause (break windows, set fires)
27%	1%	6%	10%	Tutoring non-white minority group students
27%	3%	4%	11%	Campaigning for public officials

CODE:

A = Approve of the named activity
H = Have participated in it
W = Would participate in it in the future

TABLE 3

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THESE ACTIVITIES?

A	H	W	BLANK	
71%	15%	43%	22%	Carrying picket signs
41%	38%	35%	45%	Taking "soft" drugs (marijuana, etc.)
0%	0%	0%	100%	Taking "hard" drugs (heroin, etc.)
88%	34%	73%	3%	Demonstrating non-violently for a just cause
25%	04%	11%	74%	Demonstrating non-violently for any cause
68%	78%	62%	13%	Taking alcohol
83%	42%	64%	7%	Circulating petitions
03%	27%	07%	73%	Cheating
28%	35%	14%	53%	Using tobacco
86%	46%	72%	3%	Writing to public officials
07%	01%	06%	87%	Demonstrating violently for a just cause (break windows, set fires)
00%	00%	00%	100%	Demonstrating violently for any cause (break windows, set fires)
82%	14%	60%	10%	Tutoring non-white minority group students
82%	24%	59%	11%	Campaigning for public officials

CODE:

A = Approve of the named activity
H = Have participated in it
W = Would participate in it in the future

TABLE 4

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THESE IMPORTANT TOPICS?

AG*	UN	DIS	
89%	8%	3%	Eighteen-year-olds are mature enough to be given the right to vote.
66%	11%	23%	It should be legal for anyone to get an abortion upon request.
18%	19%	63%	To control pollution, all we need to do is enforce existing laws.
29%	26%	45%	To combat over-population, there should be a special "reward" payment to families with two or fewer children.
# 47%	24%	28%	The use of marijuana should be legalized.
18%	29%	53%	Our country should *never* engage in military activity outside the U.S.
89%	6%	5%	There should be more investigations of the honesty and integrity of government officials.
52%	36%	12%	I expect another *major* war within my lifetime.
12%	17%	71%	Only by violence can Blacks gain what Whites have deprived them of for 300 years.
8%	18%	74%	College administrators should call the police at the first sign of trouble.
# 52%	31%	16%	Student unrest is *primarily* the result of the expanding social concern of students.
# 22%	42%	35%	Student unrest is *primarily* the result of administrators who do not understand student needs.
40%	21%	39%	*Most* students are not interested in a lot of change.
69%	18%	13%	*Most* students share the activist's concern for social and political improvement but disagree with the activist's tactics.
85%	11%	4%	*Most* students want non-violent change.
89%	7%	4%	*Any* student should be allowed to protest non-violently without fear of reprisal.

*AG is a combination of "strongly agree" and "agree" answers

DIS is a combination of "disagree" and "strongly disagree" answers

UN = uncertain

TABLE 4 (Cont'd)

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THESE IMPORTANT TOPICS?

AG*	UN	DIS	
48%	29%	23%	*Many* student protestors are just having fun rather than being serious activists.
58%	26%	16%	Activists speak in terms of their rights but rarely about their responsibilities.
3%	17%	80%	The activist can be characterized as a "mental case."
20%	16%	64%	Most adults want youths to live by very strict "Puritan" values.
38%	26%	36%	Most adults are hypocrites-they preach one thing but do another.
43%	25%	32%	Most adults think today's youths are "going to pot" - are hostile, disrespectful, inconsiderate, etc.
# 80%	10%	9%	Most adults think that youths with beards, long hair, "hippie" dress, will behave in a certain way (i.e., disrespectfully).
# 16%	31%	52%	Most adults understand and respect young people
# 18%	32%	49%	Most adults are so preoccupied with their own lives they have no time for their children.
# 32%	29%	38%	Most adults feel that their money is a substitute for love, respect, and understanding.
65%	19%	16%	Most adults treat teenagers as "children" long after they're ready to make their own decisions.

AG* is a combination of "strongly agree" and "agree" answers.

DIS is a combination of "disagree" and "strongly disagree" answers.

UN = uncertain

#Where total percentage does not equal 100%, the difference is due to nonresponse to the item.

TABLE 5

N.B. ALL DATA REPORTED HERE ARE IN PERCENT AND RANK ORDER

3. Our nation faces many problems today. Of the following list, which do you think are the three most important? Use this key:

Beside the *single*-most important issue, write 1.
Beside the *second*-most important issue, write 2.
Beside the *third*-most important issue, write 3.

RATE JUST THREE, 1-2-3.

RANK ORDER		1	2	3	TOTAL NOMINATION
1	Pollution.	17	21	17	55
2	Racial strife.	10	16	10	36
3	Unrest on campuses.	17	16	1	34
4	Superficiality and lack of meaning in life.	16	6	8	30
5	Over-population.	8	11	6	25
6	Vietnam War.	11	1	11	23
7	Drug Addiction.	3	6	11	20
8	Other (write in)	6	8	3	19
9.5	Big government.	5	6	6	17
9.5	Inflation.	2	5	10	17
11	Adult understanding of youth.	2	3	7	12
	NO RESPONSE				8

TABLE 6

N.B. ALL DATA REPORTED HERE ARE IN PERCENTS

In questions 4 through 14, check just ONE answer to each question.

4. Very soon, you will have the chance to vote for the President of the United States. In the next presidential election, whom would you most prefer to have elected? CHECK ONLY ONE

(1)	1	Spiro Agnew	(6)	18	Eugene McCarthy
(2)	6	Julian Bond	(7)	21	Edmund Muskie
(3)	4	Hubert Humphrey	(8)	8	Richard Nixon
(4)	11	Edward Kennedy	(9)	12	George Wallace
(5)	10	John Lindsay	(10)	9	Other (write in) _____

5. If you are called in the draft, how do you personally feel you will react? (Women: answer the way you would prefer a man should react.) CHECK ONLY ONE

(1) 7 I feel it is my duty to serve and will do so willingly.

(2) 23 I am not willing but will go if called.

(3) 20 At this stage, I am not sure what I will do.

(4) 13 I will try to obtain some form of non-combat status in uniform.

(5) 18 I will seriously think of becoming some form of conscientious objector.

(6) 11 I will consider avoiding the draft by going to Canada or some other country.

(7) 7 I will consider going to jail rather than being forced to serve.

1 BLANK

6. After you complete your formal education, where do you now think you will most prefer to work? CHECK ONLY ONE

(1) 12 In industry

(2) 8 In government (city, county, state, federal).

(3) -- In the military service as a career.

(4) 30 In a social service type of job.

(5) 10 In teaching.

(6) 8 Temporarily in the Peace Corps or VISTA.

(7) 3 In just a routine job so I have time to think and relate.

(8) 26 I will want to drop out and not work.

(9) 3 I don't have the slightest idea.

DATA FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE SURVEY ARE REPORTED IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE.

TABLE 7

N.B. ALL DATA REPORTED HERE ARE IN PERCENTS

7. In my relations with others of about my own age, I: (CHECK ONLY ONE)

(1) 3 Am aloof and distant.

(2) 10 Actively seek but do not achieve closer relationships.

(3) 32 Enjoy moderate attachments to one or more other persons.

(4) 55 Enjoy close relationships with one or more other persons.

8. My family relationships can be best characterized as: (CHECK ONLY ONE)

(1) 50 I am close to both parents.

(2) 20 I am close to my mother.

(3) 5 I am close to my father.

(4) 24 I am close to neither of my parents.

1 Omit

9. Which one of the following statements is closest to describing your parents' attitudes toward you? CHECK ONLY ONE

(1) 12 They support me in all my decisions and subsequent actions.

(2) 66 They support me in all my decisions but do not always agree with my actions.

(3) 10 They reject all my decisions but do not interfere

(4) 6 They reject my decisions and forbid me to become involved.

6 Omit

10. Who in your parental family really had the final "say" about things concerning you (discipline, staying out late, special privileges, etc.)? Check the one that most closely describes your own experience. CHECK ONLY ONE

(1) 10 It was almost entirely up to my father.

(2) 30 More often up to father than mother.

(3) 34 More often up to mother than father.

(4) 16 Almost entirely up to mother

(5) 5 In my family, I received virtually no direction after I became a teenager.

5 Omit

N.B. DATA FOR ITEMS 11 and 12 ARE IN PERCENTS

11. In your own family, how many children would you eventually like to have? CHECK ONLY ONE

11 None 4 One 52 Two 21 Three 12 Four or more

12. What do you estimate your family's annual income to be? (Indicate total income before taxes.) CHECK JUST ONE

(1) 2 Less than $3,000 a year.
(2) 2 $3,000 to $4,999.
(3) 6 $5,000 to $7,499.
(4) 14 $7,500 to $9,999.
(5) 28 $10,000 to $14,999.
(6) 17 $15,000 to $19,999.
(7) 10 $20,000 to $24,999.
(8) 2 $25,000 and over.
(9) 3 I consider this information confidential.
(10) 14 I don't know.

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13. I am: 139 male. 93 female. These data are actual numbers

14. During my first semester at SUNYAB I will live These data are actual numbers

131 in University housing.

92 in my parents' home.

8 other.

If you would like to participate in follow-up studies write your Social Security number in the boxes below.